812
B214m
1858

ERRATA. p. 29—In 8th line from top insert stage direction (*pointing to Tiralda*) after the words "accompany this lady."
Strike out on line 11th, stage direction (*Exeunt officer, priest and mad Cecil*, D. L. R.)
Cecil appears in last tableau L. of Seth Swap

MIRALDA;

OR,

THE JUSTICE OF TACON.

A Drama,

IN THREE ACTS.

WRITTEN BY

M. M. BALLOU, ESQ.

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Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1858, by M. M. BALLOU, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

	Howard Athenæum, Boston, 1858.
TACON, (Governor-General of Cuba,)	Mr. H. Wallack
PEDRO MARTINEZ, (a Boatman of Havana,)	" G. Jordan
SETH SWAP, (a Yankee returning from the Silver Mines of Mexico, via Havana,)	" J. Owens
COUNT ALMONTE, (a wealthy Cuban Noble,)	" W. H. Norton
FIRST OFFICER,	" Taylor
SECOND OFFICER,	
JAILER,	" Becks
JUAN, PEREZ, (Almonte's Overseers,)	
Secretary, four Pages, Priest, eight Soldiers, Citizens and Peasants, male and female.	
MIRALDA ESTALEZ, (a Creole Cigar Girl of Havana,)	Mrs. Barrow
CECIL, (a deranged Market Woman,)	Miss Carr
LOISE, (Housekeeper to Almonte,)	" Homan

The SCENE lies in the city of Havana and its environs, during the administration of Tacon, as Governor-General, A. D. 1838.

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MIRALDA.

COSTUME.

Tacon. — Blue body coat, single breasted, Prussian collar, cuffs and flaps, heavily embroidered with gold; blue trousers, embroidered side-seams; cocked hat, gold loop, green drooping feather; scarlet official robe, ermine cape, and edged with ermine; black boots and gilt spurs.

Pedro. — Black velvet Spanish jacket and breeches; fancy leather gaiters, black shoes, and white stockings; black sombrero and net cap. — *Second Dress.* Monk's cloak and hood; beard.

Seth Swap. — Long nankeen coat, black buttons; broad striped shirt; short white kerseymere trousers; large felt hat; high-low shoes, and pink striped stockings.

Count Almonte. — Plum-colored silk velvet frock, braided chest, back and sleeves; white satin vest, embroidered; white cassimere trousers, embroidered gold side-seams; foraging cap; rapier; red silk sash; black boots and gold spurs; open-neck lace shirt; club head of hair.

Secretary. — Modern black coat suit; black silk gown.

Pages. — Sky-blue jackets, three rows white ball buttons, silver lace collar and cuffs; white waist silk sashes; white cassimere trousers, silver side-seams; black shoes.

Petitioners. — Modern citizens' dress of Cuba.

Juan. — White frock; striped shirt and trousers; crimson sashes; canvas shoes.

Perez. — Same as Juan.

Officers.

Jailer. — Blue blouse; scarlet sash; black velvet breeches; long gaiters; black shoes.

Priest. — Long black frock coat; white stock; black silk trousers; broad-brimmed clerical hat.

Spanish Peasants, Citizens of Cuba. — In the usual Spanish dresses; picturesque as possible.

Miralda. — Black Spanish body, long sleeves, sky-blue short petticoat, fancifully trimmed round the bottom; white stockings, red clocks; black shoes and red rosettes; gold rosary and crucifix.

Cecil. — Old green velvet body; black petticoat; gray stockings; black shoes, brass buckles; hair dishevelled; broad straw hat, hung at back.

Loise. — Black Spanish body; gray skirt; red stockings; black shoes and rosettes; ear-rings and necklace.

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MIRALDA.

ACT I.

SCENE I. — *The Plaza de Armas, Havana,* 4 G. *A group of males and females are seen waltzing; full band playing a popular Spanish air without,* U. E. R. H.; *among the dancers is seen* MIRALDA, *a neatly-dressed Creole girl, as the partner of* SETH SWAP, *a returned Yankee from the silver mines of Mexico, on his way home to the State of Maine; after a few moments, music ceases, and dancers stroll about at back of stage, conversing in dumb show;* CECIL, *a half deranged Creole woman, is seen sitting by herself on the ground,* R. H., *at times muttering and swaying to and fro;* MIRALDA *and* SETH SWAP *advance towards front.*

Seth. (R. H.) Cr-e-a-t-i-o-n! it's rather hot work dancin' in this climate. Say, pretty Creole, what's yer name?

Miralda. (L. H.) Miralda Estalez, senor.

Seth. Well, I reckon that's a pretty name. Where do ye live?

Miralda. In the *Calle de Mercaderes.*

Seth. In the what?

Miralda. That means the street of the merchants, in English.

Seth. Well, what do ye do there? Keep millinery, eh?

Miralda. No, senor; mine is a cigar store.

Seth. Creation! well, I'll come round and trade.

Miralda. Thank you, senor; thank you kindly.

Seth. Say, Miraldy, it's pretty clever, I reckon, in the mayor of the city to furnish music for nothin' every night.

Miralda. Mayor? Senor, what is that?

Seth. Poor thing, how ignorant ye be! don't know what a mayor is! Now, I know'd it just as easy when I wasn't but so year old. (*Putting his hand towards floor.*)

Miralda. This entertainment is given us by the governor general. He knows how the national music of Spain thrills the hearts of us Creoles. My Pedro says that treason cannot flourish in hearts which throb to the strains of our Castilian airs. Haven't you some grand national airs in your country, senor?

Seth. Haven't we? Well, I *rather* guess we have. Perhaps you never heard Hail Columby and Yankee Doodle?

Miralda. Never.

Seth. Good gracious, how you've been neglected in your bringing up!

Miralda. Do you think so, senor? — *Adios.* (*Retires up,* L. H., *among the dancers;* SETH SWAP *whistles Yankee Doodle.*)

Seth. Je-r-u-s-a-l-e-m, how hot it is! (*Wiping his forehead. Music.*)

Enter COUNT ALMONTE, 3 E. L. H.; *he regards the group of dancers carelessly, until his eyes fall on* MIRALDA, R. H. C.

Almonte. I should know that girl among a thousand. What a peerless beauty she is! — simple, innocent, unaffected. By Jove, she must not waste her sweetness on these low companions! I have marked her well; and whether here, mingling in the dance, or in her own neat little shop, she is equally beautiful, equally bewitching. (*Exeunt peasants and citizens,* R. *and* L. H. 2, 3 *and* 4 E. *Music.* ALMONTE *advances,* L. H., *and touches her arm; she joins him with a smiling recognition, and both advance to centre..*)

Seth. (R. H.) I shouldn't wonder if that ere feller was a regular don, he's so kivered over with silk and satin. How they would stare at him down to Jonesville in the State of Maine! they'd set him down as a sort of vegetible butterfly. He wouldn't make a bad side-show for a travellin' circus. Wonder what he's goin' to say to the gal. (*Retires up a little,* R. H.)

Almonte. (L. H.) Senorita Miralda, how like you the music to-night? It is Tacon's new band just arrived from Madrid.

Miralda. (C.) O, it is very, *very* sweet, senor.

Almonte. Very fair, very fair, but nothing to the delightful music of the opera.

Miralda. At the theatre, senor?

Almonte. Yes.

Miralda. Ah, this night music, senor, in the open Plaza, has been well named the *poor* man's opera! It is all *we* can afford.

Almonte. Nay, Miralda, you, who have a taste for better music, deserve to enjoy it. Hast not observed, when in the paseo, how deliciously the mingled odors of sweet flowers and fragrant plants regale the outward senses, and delight all with their fragrance?

Miralda. Indeed, yes, senor, often, very often. (*With evident pleasure.*)

Almonte. Thus, Miralda, doth good music gladden the inner sense of the heart, — (*aside, and thoughtfully,*) — and yet I am never cheerful when I hear sweet music. — (*Aloud.*) I must take you to the opera with me some evening.

Miralda. You jest, senor.

Almonte. Nay, by those bright eyes I am in earnest, fair one. Come, Miralda, art going home? We will walk together; my paquette needs replenishing from those fragrant boxes of thine.

Miralda. Nay, that were most unfit — the Count Almonte to wait upon Miralda Estalez, a poor cigar vender! You are a kind and liberal customer at my shop; but I cannot appear as your companion. Adios, senor. (MIRALDA *trips away, and exit,* 1 E. L. H.; ALMONTE *gazes after her.*)

Cecil. (R. H., *to herself, observing* ALMONTE.) Ah, serpent, hast

looked upon another victim? Must *she*, too, fall, as my poor child has fallen, a sweet flower blighted in its bloom? She was fair as Miralda, yet the tempter crossed her path, and she was lost. Six years have passed since then, six years of gnawing anguish. They say this brain is crazed; but through the darkness gleams a lurid light that leads me on — on — to the bitter end!

Seth. (*Down* C.) I wonder what that old woman's grumblin' about.

Cecil. (*Still to herself, regarding* ALMONTE.) I bide my time. These eyes shall behold your punishment ere they close in death. Vengeance is sweet, and is all I live for now.

Seth. Say, old woman, what's the matter with ye?

Cecil. They say I'm mad, (*whispering half aloud;*) but I am not mad; I am *waiting*.

Seth. O, yer waitin', are ye? Well, what fur?

Cecil. Vengeance! (*Rising to her feet.*)

(*Exit, muttering to herself,* R. H. 1 E.)

Seth. Creation! that ain't a very Christian idee; but I hope you'll have a good time. (*Walks round behind* ALMONTE, *whittling a small stick, but observing him curiously.*)

Almonte. (*Who has been gazing after* MIRALDA.) By my life, but I do love that girl, nor will I be content until she is mine. I am tired of these court belles; for however swift the blood may dance in their veins, their proud connections have an uncomfortable habit of wearing very sharp swords. Miralda is an orphan, and needs a protector. (*Crosses to* R. H.) It is curious how adroitly she foils my advances, so quietly, yet so firmly.

Seth. (*On* L. H.) Ahem!

Almonte. (*On* R. H., *starting, and half drawing his sword.*) Whom have we here? A listener?

Seth. Put up your toastin' fork; I don't want to fight.

Almonte. Who are you? and what are you doing here?

Seth. My name's Seth Swap, and I calculate I'm whittlin'.

Almonte. (*Aside.*) It is one of those prying Yankees. I'll intimidate him. (*Draws his sword.*) — Out of the way, fellow, or I'll run you through. What business have such as you upon the Plaza?

Seth. (*Quietly, drawing a revolver.*) Gently, stranger. If that's your game, you'd better say your prayers before you begin. Where I come from in the Mexican mines, we larn to du things orful sudden. Don't make any thing of shootin' a man a day; and some employ an undertaker by the year, it comes so much cheaper than by the single job.

Almonte. (*Aside.*) What fire-eaters these Americans are! (*Sheathing his sword.*) I advise you not to exhibit your firearms too freely, unless you wish to pass a few weeks in prison.

Seth. Don't make no display of these things, stranger; keep 'em for use. This is a sort of blood relation of mine, and we're inseparable friends. Revolvers is a great medicine; hain't no discovery of this century equalled 'em. The sort of pills administered by these little doctors are terrible quick in operation.

Almonte. I have no desire to quarrel with you.

Seth. O, you've kinder changed your mind about runnin' me through. Well, that's sensible.

Almonte. I suppose every man, woman, and child carries those delicate articles in your country.

Seth. Du ye, though? Well, then, you're just as mistaken as though you'd lost yer hat. We only carry 'em when we're likely to meet wild animals, and *such like varmint!*

Almonte. There's one thing you don't carry.

Seth. What's that, stranger?

Almonte. A civil tongue in your head.

Seth. I allers carry that sort of goods to market most in demand. Now, I reckon civility's a *drug* in these diggin's.

Almonte. Take my advice, however, and heed it.

(*Exit*, L. H. 1 E.)

Seth. Thank ye; good by; make my respects to the people at home. (*Musing.*) I don't like that feller's looks. If I was to express my *private* opinion about him, I should say he was a darned *sneak*. He's got a hankerin' after that Creole gal, Miraldy, and don't mean her any good. I s'pose tain't none of my business; but he mustn't offer her narry insult while I'm about. Well, here I am, Seth Swap, on my way from Mexico to Maine, United States of Ameriky. Thought I'd just stop a few weeks on this Island of Cubey and see the folks. What a funny people they are! two fifths niggers, one fifth grandees, one fifth poll parots and fireflies, and one fifth darnation pootty gals. The rest's pootty much sugar cane and merlasses. Let me see. — I mustn't forget to go and see that cigar gal to-morrow. Hail Columby! how she danced! (*Goes off dancing a grotesque jig*, R. H. 1 E.)

SCENE II. — *Interior of a common City House*, 2 *and* 4 G., *neat and comfortable. Plain table and two chairs carried on from* R. H.; *through* D. *flat*, L. H., *is seen a counter; on it are displayed cigar boxes, &c.*

Enter MIRALDA, L. H.

Miralda. The Count Almonte come home with me, indeed! I wonder what Pedro, my dear, good Pedro Martinez, would say to that. (*Bustling about, and arranging room.*) Pedro will be here soon, poor fellow! I should think he would get very tired at night, after rowing his boat all day over the harbor, at the beck and call of every one who has a peso to spare. What a student he is, to be sure! When not plying the oar, he always has a book in his hand.

SONG. — MIRALDA.

When the sea blushes red in the sunset,
And the toils of the day are all o'er,
I wait the return of my lover,
And list for the dash of his oar.
Mi Pedro querido, mi amor! *

* My dear Pedro, my beloved.

When his bark I behold at the landing,
And know that his perils are o'er,
No music at night in the Plaza,
So sweet as his step on the shore.
Mi Pedro querido, mi amor!

Though fortune be ever so fickle,
And poverty mine evermore,
My Pedro is gentle and constant;
He loves me; I ask for no more.
Mi Pedro querido, mi amor!

Ah, there he comes! I know his step *so* well. (*Goes towards* D. F. L. H., *to meet him.*)

Enter PEDRO, D. F. L. H., *quickly, and taking her hand, folds it within his own upon his breast.*

Pedro. My own dear Miralda. It quite revives one, after a day of toil, to look into those bright eyes. I'm glad smiles don't cost money, darling; for if they did, you would be a terrible spendthrift. (*Kisses her cheek.*)

Miralda. Where do you learn to flatter so gracefully, Pedro? Listening to the talk of the fine people you row over to the Moro, or dost read it in books?

Pedro. I would not be guilty of one word of flattery to you, Miralda, for the brightest doubloon in Tacon's treasury. (*Puts his arm about her waist.*) No, no, flattery is too base a coin for us humble ones, though it passes current with the great.

Miralda. You always speak so wisely, Pedro, that I know you are right; and yet I think a little flattery, a *very little*, is sometimes pleasant. Now, how agreeable it is to flatter one's self! It puts one in such good humor. If my little looking glass rewards me with a smile in the morning, I am sure to wear it on my lips all day long. And then my good humor is not selfish; it reflects itself in others, and the whole city seems fuller of sunshine. Can there be the least bit of harm in *that*, Pedro?

Pedro. Trust flattery from no one, not even thyself, Miralda; it corrupts both receiver and giver, and is the scarlet livery of villany.

Miralda. I believe you, Pedro.

Pedro. All tell you, and tell you truly, Miralda, that you are beautiful. To me, who know your innate goodness, you are ineffably lovely; but the great gift of beauty was not designed by Heaven to feed female vanity; it was sent that we might love and be beloved.

Miralda. You are so pleasant, so wise, Pedro, I love to hear you talk. Good father Monti says you should have been a priest. But come, sit down, and tell me the day's experience. (*They sit.*)

Pedro. It is much the same as ever, rowing all day, hither and thither, with small profit and heavy labor; but then I think of the pleasant evening hour I shall pass with you, and so toil on cheerfully until twilight shuts over the harbor.

Miralda. Thou dost love me, Pedro, *truly* love me? (*Folding her hands over his shoulder, and looking tenderly into his face.*) With your sex, who are ever buffeting the stern current of life, love, at best, can be but a chapter of existence; but, ah! with us it is the whole volume of life. Whom have I to love but thee?

Pedro. Do I love you, Miralda? Ay, with all my heart. It fills my thoughts the long day through, and my dreams at night. It forms the source and object of all my ambition, the panacea for all my laborious toil, the lamp that lights me by my poor mother's invalid couch, giving me a nobility before unknown to my grosser nature. It hath made me a very prodigal in my affections, so that my heart beats for all and every thing, which, like thyself, is beautiful and good. Love is a pleasant tyranny, dearest; we kiss the arrow that wounds us.

Miralda. But wherefore the wound, Pedro? There may be pain in hating, but surely not in loving.

Pedro. It gladdens me sometimes even to sadness, for I fear it may not always be thus happy with us; but I suppose that deep love, like the deeper waters of the bay, must have a gloom in it.

Miralda. You will make love a science, Pedro, instead of a sentiment, and then, indeed, it will be too deep for me.

Pedro. Look ever thus trustingly upon me, and you will silence all argument. But, Miralda, we have waited long and faithfully for each other, yet the goal of our happy marriage seems as distant as ever.

Miralda. Don't repine, Pedro; you know we are saving something every day towards the necessary sum to furnish our home.

Pedro. Yes, *you* are saving every day; but little do I save, Miralda, with my aged mother to support.

Miralda. And a dutiful son you are. But you remember I made a solemn promise to my mother, before she died, that I would not marry until I had paid the last peso of the mortgage upon this little house, so that I might always be sure of a home.

Pedro. Yes, I know all this.

Miralda. In a few months this purpose will be accomplished, and then we will fulfil our sacred promise to each other. And yet, dear Pedro, I never think of it without almost trembling; it is the bloom or blight of hearts like mine — how vast the stake, how enviable the prize! I know of no lot which can vie with that of a retired and well-beloved wife. It is the crown of a true woman's ambition, the undivided dominion of one faithful heart.

Pedro. May the saints bless thee for a dear, good girl, as thou art. I must home now, Miralda, for you know there is a poor invalid there who claims a large share of my attention. Good night, dearest. (*Kisses her cheek.*)

Miralda. Good night, dear Pedro. — (*To herself.*) I'm not half good enough to be his wife, he's so noble and true. Though he boasts no titled rank, wears no glittering star upon his breast, no golden spur upon his heel, yet Nature, with a touch of her hand, has conferred on him her own true order of nobility. (*Busies herself in setting back the chairs, and humming a light air.*)

Enter COUNT ALMONTE, D. F. L. H.

Almonte. Ah, Miralda, you would not walk with me; so you see I have come by myself. (*Approaching her and taking her hand, which she yields reluctantly.*) I have brought you a keepsake, which I want you to wear for me. (*Attempts to put a ring on her finger.*)

Miralda. A *diamond*, senor! Nay, I cannot accept it from you. The costly gem would make me blush each time I put it on, for well my friends would know I could not afford the jewel.

Almonte. Heed not thy so-called friends; they are poor and lowly. I am rich, Miralda, and this little gift is but the precursor of many such, still more valuable, if thou wilt but be my friend.

Miralda. Friendship, senor, is a free gift; it cannot be bought with gold or precious stones. You have been very kind to me — have purchased largely at my little store. I already feel indebted to you. Put by the jewel, and do not attempt to place me under obligations I cannot repay.

Almonte. But you can easily repay every thing. (*Retains her hand.*)

Miralda. (*With surprise.*) Easily repay you, senor! How?

Almonte. Be my *dear* friend — come with me to my home at Cerito. It is but a short league from the city walls — as fairy-like a garden as lies beneath the tropics. Every luxury — every care shall be yours. I will be all in all to you, and you shall ——

Miralda. Stop, senor! (*Indignantly withdrawing her hand.*) It needs no more. I understand you. May Heaven forgive you for thus addressing one so lonely and unprotected as myself. Perhaps I have merited this lesson, but O, it is bitter indeed to be so misunderstood! (*Sobs.*)

Almonte. Be not so hasty, Miralda. I have spoken thee fairly, not roughly. Think, girl, of the plodding, laborious life you lead, and contrast it with the one of luxury I offer. I will make thee mistress of all my broad estates. Nay, stamp not thy pretty foot in anger and disdain, or you will *defy* me; and the devil once raised in my breast will rage there until I bring thee to my feet.

Miralda. Senor, I fear you not, though your threats sound strangely, coming from lips until now so courteous. O, look not thus upon me! speak no more to me of this! Think, senor, of your own high estate, and my lowly and unprotected condition. You would pity me, if you could realize the painful load you have even now cast upon my heart. (*Sits down at* R. H., *and sobs, with head upon the table.*)

Almonte. (*On* L. H., *aside.*) She is as stubborn as she is beautiful. I like her all the better for this spirit. It is strange how innocence abashes one! That frail girl seemed to me like a giant in her moral strength; but let me tell thee, proud one, innocence is a poor substitute for experience. (*Approaches and touches her arm.*)

Miralda. (*Starting up.*) Touch me not, senor!

Almonte. Not so fast, not so fast, Miralda. (*Struggles for her hand.*)

Miralda. Leave me, senor; I beseech you, leave me.
Almonte. One kiss first, one parting kiss. (*Struggles with her.*)

Enter SETH SWAP, D. F. L. H. *He adroitly draws* ALMONTE'S *sword from his side, dashes him to* L. H., *and places sword point at his throat.*

Seth. C-r-e-a-t-i-o-n! what does all this mean? If you move an inch, you miserable specimen of human natur', I'll let daylight clean through ye!'
Miralda. (R. H.) O, spare him! spare him! he will go at once.
Seth. (C.) Yes, he'll go as soon as I'll let him, depend on it. Look ye, stranger! I come from New England, and am a Yankee born and bred. I ain't used to seein' women treated in this way, and it *r-a-t-h-e-r* riles me. There's your sword — (*throws it on the floor*) — and there's the door. Now, if you will just put yourself on the other side of it, you'll prevent me from doin' you a mischief.
Almonte. (L. H. — *In a rage, picking up his sword.*) It will be my turn next. — (*Aside.*) This insult has decided me — my plan shall be executed. (*Exit,* D. F. L. H.)
Miralda. Ah, senor, I owe you many thanks.
Seth. Don't mention it. I was goin' by the door, and I heard yer voice, as if in distress, so in I bolted. (*Leading her to seat,* R. H.) Sit down, Miraldy; ye look pale and tremble. Shan't I call some of yer family?
Miralda. Alas, I am quite alone!
Seth. No brother, sister, nor parents?
Miralda. (*Sadly.*) None.
Seth. Guess that's the reason this feller wasn't afraid to insult ye. Christopher Columbus! I wonder what some folks are made *of*, and then ag'in I wonder what they're made *for*. Now, if we had this chap down to Jonesville, we'd tar and feather him in considerable less than no time, and ride him out of town on a patent locomotive of our invention in the shape of a three-cornered rail, and he'd find it a hard road to travel, by Jerusalem!
Miralda. I am better now. You'll come and see me to-morrow, won't you, senor?
Seth. Guess I will, early as you please.
Miralda. Good night, and many thanks. (*Giving him her hand.*)
Seth. Ain't afraid this feller'l come back, are ye? Cause it would just suit my case to walk into him. 'Twould be a sort of gentle tonic, and I need something of the sort in this hot climate. (*Squaring off and striking at an imaginary enemy.*)
Miralda. It was but the violence of the moment; he will not repeat it.
Seth. Good night, then. (*Aside.*) I should like to come across that chap outside.
(*Exit,* D. F. L. H., *making passes at an imaginary foe.*)
Miralda. (*Throwing herself into a chair.*) Alas, that this should have happened! Count Almonte is rich and powerful. He can easily crush both Pedro and me if he will. Would that it might

have been spared me. Pedro must not know of this; it would only make him anxious and bitter against the count. I surely need not fear this annoyance again, and yet, now that he has dropped the cloak from his villany, he may be reckless. And to what am I indebted for this persecution? They tell me I am beautiful — even Pedro, who never flatters, says this; and I, too, know it, for who can be unconscious of this gift of Heaven! Alas, beauty to me is but a sad mischance! We can secrete our gold from the eyes of thieves; but a fair face is more tempting to a villain, and *that* who can hide? Once I think I was vain of this face — (*looking in the glass*) — when just emerging from childhood to gurlhood, when all tongues magnified its beauty to me — and thought it no harm to do so. Vanity was fast ripening into affectation in my thoughtless heart, when Pedro came, and by his tender love and gentle chiding, he rooted the weed away; and now I would only be beautiful for his sake, or even not beautiful at all, so that he will but love me still! Hark! what sound is that?

Enter OFFICER *and six soldiers,* D. F. L. H.

Officer. (L. C.) Is your name Miralda Estalez?

Miralda. (R. H. — *In amazement.*) It is.

Officer. Then you will come with me.

Miralda. (*Much excited.*) By whose orders?

Officer. The governor general's.

Miralda. Then, indeed, I must obey. But pray what have I done which should cause me to be arrested?

Officer. I know not. I obey my orders.

Miralda. Alas, where will this accumulation of troubles end? Would that Pedro were here to advise me! I am ready to obey you. My trust is in One higher even than Tacon.

Officer. (*In amazement.*) Higher than Tacon?

Miralda. Ay, senor — (*pointing solemnly upwards*) — the Judge of judges! (*Music.*)

TABLEAU.

TWO SOLDIERS, D. F. L. H.

MIRALDA. OFFICER.

FOUR SOLDIERS, L. H.

Slow Drop.

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I. — *A Cell in a Prison,* 1 G. PEDRO *sits gloomily in confinement on floor,* R. H., *chained. Grated door,* L. H. 1 E.

Pedro. Scarcely had I discovered that Miralda was missing, before I was myself arrested, on a charge of fishing in the bay against the law, fined, and cruelly sent hither for punishment. I know not how it can be, yet I much fear this injustice has some connection with Miralda's disappearance. Strange that no one should know aught about her — that she should not have left a line or word of some sort for me. O that I were free! I would search day and night for her. I am fined three doubloons. It might as well have been a hundred. I cannot pay it. If I knew Miralda was safe, I could be patient. What a checkerboard is this waking dream of life! Yesterday free, to-day a prisoner; at sunrise carolling with the birds, at night, perhaps, sleeping in the tomb. What a mottled web of destiny! How manifold the allotments of evil and of good! — much to endure, little to enjoy — yes, it is indeed a dream! God send that death may prove its happy awakening! Ah, how prophetic were the promptings of my soul, when last I met Miralda! The gloom of deep waters o'ershadowed me then; it was the presage of this sad fate. O, that love — the nearest glimpse of paradise which man may enjoy — can thus be rendered his greatest sorrow! I hear some one approaching; I have no *friend* who would be able thus to purchase entrance to my prison; it must be some new ill that is to break upon me. (*Noise of chains and bolt without,* L. H. 1 E.)

Enter JAILER *and* SETH SWAP, D. L. H. 1 E.

Seth. Say, jailer, who was that woman outside, by the door? I've seen her somewhar.

Jailer. That was mad Cecil — every body knows mad Cecil.

Seth. Can't say I have that pleasure. But what ails her?

Jailer. She's crazy.

Seth. Well, I half suspected that. Now, Mr. Lock and Key, the question naturally suggests itself to one of my inquiring disposition, what makes the woman mad? Going crazy isn't such a jolly piece of business, that folks try it on for fun here in Cuba, do they?

Jailer. Well, you see, senor, she was a fruit woman in the market, and had a pretty daughter Isabelle, who sold flowers on the Plaza, and she imagines that Count Almonte spirited her away somehow.

Seth. She *imagines* it, does she? Well, I don't — I *believe* it.

Jailer. The girl did disappear strangely, and it was said she was traced to the count's plantation, and died there some months afterwards. The count had to go away for a while, until the matter was partly forgotten, for there was a bad story about poison and all that sort of thing.

Seth. Jerusalem! guess I'm pickin' up some general information here that will be of use to somebody.

Jailer. I'll leave you here, and return shortly.

(*Exit*, D. L. H. 1 E.)

Seth. Don't hurry yourself (*Turning to prisoner*, R. H.) Your name, I reckon, is Pedro Martinez?

Pedro. It is.

Seth. And I guess you are a friend of Miraldy's.

Pedro. I am.

Seth. Well, ye see, my friend, I'm acquainted with her tu, and findin' that she's disappeared rather mysterious, I've been makin' inquiries, and found out you knowd her, and that you'd got into the limbos. Now, what's all this mean? What ye been doin' on — robbin' hen roosts?

Pedro. I am committed on a charge of fishing in the bay.

Seth. Fishin'? Jerusalem! hasn't a man a right to fish in the Atlantic Ocean?

Pedro. It is the monopoly of the government, and is not permitted.

Seth. I s'pose they don't allow you to catch rain water, nor use the sunshine, du they? If you knowd it was ag'in the law, what'd ye go and fish for?

Pedro. I did not fish, my friend; the charge is a false one, and got up for some purpose, to deprive me of my liberty.

Seth. O, ye ain't guilty of the terrible crime of fishin', are ye? Well, give us your hand, then.

Pedro. (*Extending his hand, and aside.*) This singular person seems to be friendly; perhaps he may aid me in seeking Miralda.

Seth. Well, if ye ain't guilty, why don't ye prove it, and get out of here, double quick time?

Pedro. It will be many weeks before I can be heard. My only alternative is to pay the fine, and that I cannot do.

Seth. Fine? Jerusalem! can ye get out by payin' a fine?

Pedro. Yes, sênor.

Seth. How much?

Pedro. Three doubloons — a sum far beyond my means. Alas, that the want of this money may prove so fatal to Miralda!

Seth. Three doubloons — (*counting his fingers*) — that's about fifty dollars; and if that amount is paid, you can go, can ye?

Pedro. If it were *paid* I could; but that is out of the question.

Seth. No, 'tain't out of the question. What's the use of addin' the sin of falsehood to your awful crime of fishin'? Where's this jailer? I'll pay your fine. (*Counting out the gold in his hand.*)

Pedro. Senor, you overpower me with your generosity. There is a saying among us, that a man should rely only on God and himself; but ah, what should we do without friends! Pause for a moment — I fear I can never repay this sum; it is only by the greatest frugality that I can support my aged and decrepit mother.

Seth. Don't waste no more words upon that 'ere subject — time's precious — and now let's talk about Miraldy. I more'n half suspect that cussed Colonel Almonte is at the bottom of all this business.

Pedro. Almonte?

Seth. Yes; he's a customer of Miraldy's; she had a *leetle* trouble

with him the other evening when I was round, and puttin' this and that together, I think I smell a mice!

Pedro. Your discrimination has thrown an important light upon the matter. I know this Count Almonte; he is an unprincipled nobleman, who has a plantation at Cerito. I tremble to think Miralda may be in his power. Ah, Miralda, can it be that he has dazzled you with his immense wealth and lavish promises! Is it possible that riches can so have dignified selfishness — so exalted villany!

Seth. Look a-here! none of that! Don't cast no reflections on the gal! If that Major Almonte has got her out at his house, he didn't do it by no fair means. — (*Half musing to himself.*) He couldn't have garotted her — only the government can do that in this island — and chloroform ain't to be had. I'll bet a hat he took her off by main force.

Pedro. That would seem impossible. Open violence could not be resorted to, without challenging too much publicity.

Seth. I don't know about that. I've seen *some* violence since I landed in Cuba, and had a finger in the pie myself.

Pedro. Her house is in so public a place, and is so well known, that I should suspect stratagem rather than violence.

Seth. You know where this Captain Almonte lives?

Pedro. Yes.

Seth. Then let's go out there quicker'n chain lightnin'.

Pedro. It is the first thing to be done. I am ready to go the moment I am released.

Seth. Here, you jailer you! (*Calling out of the grated door.*) Come here! you're wanted. (*No answer.*) Hollo! I say, are you deaf?

Enter JAILER, D. L. H. 1 E.

Jailer. Well, senor, what is wanted?

Seth. Mr. Martinez, here, wants to pay his fine. How much is it?

Jailer. (*Consulting memorandum book.*) Three doubloons.

Seth. If that's paid, he's free to go, is he?

Jailer. We cannot hold a prisoner after the payment of his fine.

Seth. Very well, there's the tin. (*Handing the money.*) Now, Pedro, let's put several of the longest streets in town between us and this hospitable mansion!

Pedro. (*Preparing to go.*) With all my heart! How little did I anticipate this joyful result an hour since! Ah, Fortune, Fortune, thou art the veriest coquette of all whom we worship, hiding thy face like the bright sun behind the thinnest cloud, only to break forth upon us with dazzling power! But one moment since, I was repining, sick at heart, dejected, and hopeless; now I am *free* once more; and the rod which was my weakness shall be my staff!

Seth. Come, 'taint no use talkin' about it! We'll fix Almonty's flint for him, or my name's not Seth Swap!

(*Exeunt* SETH SWAP *and* PEDRO, D. L. H. 1 E.)

Jailer. Queer people, those Americans! I suppose that man's a nobleman in his own country! (*Exit*, D. L. H. 1 E.)

SCENE II. – *Handsomely furnished Country Room at Cerito,* 3 G., *the house of* COUNT ALMONTE. *Handsome table, with flowers and books, on* L. H. *Two chairs on* L. H. MIRALDA *seen sitting thoughtfully at the table,* L. H., *with open book. Sofa on* R. H. *Window in* F. C., *backed with garden. Set door,* L. H. 1 E. *Set door,* R. H. 1 E.

Miralda. What a miserable week of mental torture have I passed since the evening I was so foully abducted from my home! I see it all now. Those soldiers were bribed by Almonte for his own vile purpose. Fortunately, business has kept him absent from his home, and I have scarcely seen him since my confinement here. O that I had left some written word for Pedro! But I knew not where I was going, even after I entered the volante and drove through the city. What possible clew can Pedro obtain to where I am? How strange must it seem to him! What anxiety he will suffer! Alas! alas! am I not completely deserted! (MIRALDA *turns to a rich bouquet of flowers upon the table by her side, musing.*) Flowers! what have I to do with them, sweet and beautiful as they are! the tender and fragrant emblems which deck the marriage altar, the cradle, and the tomb! How they jar upon my senses *here!* The Persian in the far East writes his love in a nosegay, and the Hindoo Cupid tips his arrows with flowers, while these rich orange blossoms (*plucking one*) are the bridal crown of the world! The deadly lobelia were more appropriate for this place, to typify its owner's malevolence, or the sorrowing asphodel, to form a fitting ornament for my brow! (*A knock is heard at* D. L. H. 1 E.)

Enter LOISE, D. L. H. 1 E.

Loise. Can I do aught for you to-day, senorita? Wilt have some delicacy prepared — some fresh zapotas, or bananas?

Miralda. Nay, good Loise, I have no appetite. Has the count yet returned?

Loise. Not yet, senorita. But let me bring thee some food — thou wilt faint with this long fasting.

Miralda. Speak not of food, but tell me, good Loise, is it impossible for me to escape from this confinement?

Loise. Indeed, yes, senorita. The two overseers, Juan and Perez, have strict orders from the count to watch day and night, and I am little better than a slave here.

Miralda. Sad fate is mine! but Heaven will not desert me, Loise. I feel strangely sustained and confident. Last night I dreamed a sweet, happy dream — so truthful, so vivid — of Pedro, and fifty joyful things. I seemed once more in my happy home. But I was not alone. Pedro was by my side, and I wore my bridal veil and wreaths of orange flowers. We were wedded, and the word *parting* was blotted from our memory, while from the open window the music of the Plaza sounded sweet upon my ears. From above, good Loise, there beamed upon me an angel form in robes of light, and I beheld my mother smiling upon and blessing me. Brighter than tongue can

tell was this sweet vision — until at last I awoke to captivity and sorrow. Yet something tells me this dream was a happy omen. No, I will not repine; the saints will protect me!

Loise. I pray that they may do so, senorita; but the count is a bold, bad man, unscrupulous in the pursuit of his object. Thou art not the only bird whose wings he has clipped.

Miralda. (*Musing.*) Indeed!

Loise. Heavy is my sin, that I have so long been his passive tool! But I have no choice — I must obey him, or perhaps lose my life. Ah, what a fearful tale of wrong and crime enacted here could I discover, if I dared to speak — too terrible even to whisper! If I *would* liberate you, poor child, I could not. He knows too well to give me entire trust.

Miralda. Thou art ever kind, Loise, and have done much to mitigate my imprisonment these many weary hours.

Loise. I was bid to keep you very close, and admit no one to your presence. But there is a good priest without, who claims the right to see all parties. He has heard my confession, and I can see no harm in his coming hither.

Miralda. Admit the good father, by all means. — (*Aside.*) O, may I not possibly touch his heart by my story! And if he be not bound to Almonte by some secret tie, will he not serve me? His sacred office will shield him from harm. (*Exit* LOISE, D. L. H. 1 E.)

Reënter LOISE, *with* PEDRO *disguised as a monk*, D. L. H. 1 E.

Loise. Your reverence will please be brief with the senorita, as I much fear I have run the risk of the count's displeasure in thus admitting you. He is a terrible man when aroused, and we know not what he will do.

Pedro. I will be brief. Go you hence. (LOISE *crosses behind and exits*, D. R. H. 1 E.) (*In a deep voice.*) And now, daughter, what brings you here?

Miralda. Treachery, good father, treachery. But dare I speak?

Pedro. First answer me; do you not love this Count Almonte? Has he not persuaded you voluntarily to leave your home, and to share the luxury of his wealth and estate?

Miralda. Indeed, indeed, no.

Pedro. Perhaps you love another, my daughter.

Miralda. O, father, yes; I do love another, and am betrothed to him.

Pedro. His name?

Miralda. Pedro Martinez.

Pedro. (*Throwing back his cowl and removing his beard, discovers himself.* MIRALDA *throws herself into his arms with a cry of delight.*) Ah, ever thus, dear one, be this thy place of refuge! Thou art indeed true to thyself and to me!

Miralda. Could you doubt it, Pedro?

Pedro. Nay, I knew not what to think. I wandered in search of thee day and night, until I was myself imprisoned — doubtless by the machinations of this same fiend in human shape. At last I was be-

friended by a generous American, who knows you, and whose shrewdness has aided me thus in seeking you. Fortunately, the count is absent, and thus far I have succeeded, though I see the people here are very vigilant and suspicious.

Miralda. Ah, Pedro, cannot you take me away?

Pedro. That would be impossible, for this house is kept more like a castle than a dwelling house. But fear not. Now I know where you are, I shall no longer labor in the dark. Be patient, Miralda; I will go boldly to Tacon, and tell my story. 'Tis said he metes out even-handed justice to all. He declares it to be his great standing policy — stern, quick, and ofttimes *terrible* justice. It is the one great virtue of those who command; it is the powerful, though unseen, arm of discipline which governs us. To the great and brave Tacon we will look for justice. (*Knocking at* D. R. H. 1 E. PEDRO *conceals his face again.*)

Enter LOISE, D. R. H. 1 E.

Loise. I fear, good father, to have you longer remain. The count will be here immediately.

Pedro. Good senora, but a moment more, and my ghastly office is done.

Loise. I will watch without, and give you notice of his approach.
(*Exit*, D. R. H. 1 E.)

Pedro. Miralda, has this villain dared to offer further insult save thus to imprison you?

Miralda. No, Pedro. He has been absent nearly all the while; but I knew he was to return this day.

Pedro. Take this weapon — (*handing her a dagger*) — if *necessary*, use it! but I have no doubt I can bring matters to an issue with this valiant woman stealer before he will have time to seriously annoy you.

Miralda. (*Kissing the dagger, and placing it in her bosom.*) A thousand thanks! I feel a host of strength with this keen steel in my possession. I tremble to have you longer stay, yet fear to have you go.

Pedro. Good by, dearest! — (*pressing her in his arms*) — Hark! here comes the duenna.

Enter LOISE, D. R. H. 1 E.

Loise. Good priest, hasten, I beseech you! My master is even now arrived. I tremble lest he should find you here.
(*Exeunt* LOISE *and* PEDRO, D. L. H. 1 E.)
(MIRALDA *hastens to the window*, C., *to see him depart, and resumes her seat*, L. H., *just as* ALMONTE *enters.*)

Enter ALMONTE, D. R. H. 1 E.

Almonte. (*To himself.*) I wonder who that priest was I saw enter the alley of palms! I know of no one who should come hither un-

bid. I must inquire about this. (*Turning to* MIRALDA.) How fares my mocking bird to-day? Is thy cage a pleasant one? and hast thou every necessary comfort?

Miralda. I lack all comforts, senor, wanting one — without which all others must be tasteless.

Almonte. What is that, Miralda?

Miralda. (*Walking to window, and pointing out.*) Senor, behold yonder bright-winged pedoreva, upon the orange branch! How swells his scarlet throat! how vibrates the green plumage of his body with song! And here, still nearer to us, on the blooming lime hedge, observe the tiny indigo bird, so sweet of voice! the fragrant air is full of his carols. Take these, confine them in the gaudiest cage, and supply them in abundance with their daintiest native food, they will *sing no more!* Senor, it is my *liberty* for which I pine!

Almonte. That shall be granted in good time, after we better understand each other. Put off that cold, repulsive look, and I will grant liberty or aught else you may demand.

Miralda. The countenance is Nature's index to the heart. I cannot dissemble. No act of yours can palliate the wrong you have done me. Ah, why do you not send me back at once to my home, repent of the evil you had intended me, and let the sun shine in again upon my clouded and aching heart? This would be noble, and show that your better nature had prevailed.

Almonte. (*With a sneer.*) I have not the sublime virtue to let so agreeable a chance slip from my grasp. No, Miralda, I have gone too far to recede, and you must be mine at any penalty. I have hazarded a wild risk thus to possess you.

Miralda. Remember, I am a poor, powerless girl — drive me not to extremity — be generous, and spare me! Have you no sister? no sacred memory of a mother? Ah, think of them, and spare her who pleads to you!

Almonte. Nay, Miralda, there is no such fearful crisis proposed to you. Your happiness shall be in my keeping. I have learned of this engagement with a boatman of the bay — a fellow who has neglected his oars, to meddle with books — even now he is in prison for some illegal conduct. What can be anticipated from such a connection, save poverty and toil? Think better of it — become my companion and mistress here, with luxury and power!

Miralda. Senor, there are but three relations which a true woman can sustain to your sex — *mother, sister,* and *wife.* It needs no words to show the impossibility of my becoming aught to you; therefore, for the love of Heaven, and your own soul, persecute me no further! Ah, senor, you are rich in worldly treasures; you can defy want, harm, and may be even the *laws;* but *I* am portionless, save in that one priceless jewel, my *innocence.* Your sex is of sterner metal; in position and golden treasures you find a coat of mail impervious to the arm of the world, though it may not shield the finer surface of your conscience. But with us, alas! innocence is a blossom of such tender life, borne upon a stem so fragile, that a touch may wither it, a glance destroy — and however watered by tears of anguish, it blooms no more!

Almonte. You are *stubborn*, Miralda.

Miralda. Or, rather, I am firm, senor.

Almonte. You *defy* me, girl! (*Becoming excited and angry.*) I tell thee I will bear this no longer. I am master here, and will be obeyed. Come, give me thy hand, as a token of amnesty between us, and a truce to these harangues. (*Approaches her firmly.*)

Miralda. Never, senor! Keep thy hand away from me! Touch me not!

Almonte. How long is this to last?

Miralda. Ever and always. I will not permit thee to touch me.

Almonte. (*Seizing her, and struggling for her hand, round to* R. H.) We will see, my little vixen!

Miralda. (*Breaking from him, and drawing the dagger.*) Stand back, senor! Approach me again, and I will show you the power of a creole's arm, when raised in defence of her honor!

Almonte. (*As he strides up and down the stage, in great excitement.*) A perfect tigress! But I will quell her, though! (*Again approaches her.*)

Enter SETH SWAP, *leaping in at window*, C., *between* MIRALDA *and* ALMONTE.

Seth. How d'ye do, Miraldy? (*Holding out his hand to her, and facing* ALMONTE.)

Miralda. Ah, you are a friend indeed! (*Seizes his hand eagerly.*)

Mad CECIL *seen at window in* C.

Cecil. (*At back* C.) Foiled! foiled! foiled! ha, ha, ha! (*Laughs wildly.*)

Almonte. (*On* L. H.) That mad creature here! Is there no way to get rid of her?

Cecil. I bide my time! Vengeance is sweet! (*Disappears.*)

Seth. (C.) There's that old woman again. Good gracious! she turns up every where! — (*To* ALMONTE.) At your old tricks, stranger?

Almonte. Perdition take you! How dare you enter my house thus?

Seth. Why, ye see, I found the briers so darned sharp in your lime hedge, yonder, that I thought I'd get into more comfortable quarters.

Almonte. You have been hiding in my garden, then!

Seth. It's as true as preachin'. (*Dusting his clothes.*)

Almonte. Why, you thieving, prying rascal ——

Seth. Hold on, right where ye are, for a minute, 'square! Be a *l-e-e-t-l-e* careful how you call names; for though I'm noted for bein' as mild as a pigeon in my disposition, yet I'm free to confess it would give me a heap of pleasure to carve you up about as big as ten cent pieces. As I'm here to take care of this poor gal, I can bear considerable abuse myself; but, by the Eternal! I'll shoot you like a dog, if you touch her agin! (*Leads* MIRALDA *to sofa*, R. H., *and stands beside her.*)

Almonte. Curse this fellow! he is my evil genius, and crosses me every where; but I will soon settle his business for him. (*Rings bell on table,* L. H.)

Enter LOISE, D. L. H. 1 E., *who evinces surprise at seeing* SETH SWAP.

Send Juan and Perez here quickly.

Loise. I wonder what will happen now. (*Exit,* D. L. H. 1 E.)

Seth. Stranger, I foresee trouble here, and I reckon it's best to be plain, 'cause after operations is commenced, I don't *talk* much. You are, doubtless, acquainted with these little articles of commerce. (*Showing a brace of revolvers.*) I carry in these twelve shot; and if you give me a chance to prac-ti-ze, you'll find that Seth Swap don't miss his aim. Now, if you are troubled with a surplus population, hereabouts, I'm ready to reduce the census of this island one dozen — commencin' with yourself. Nuff said.

Almonte. (*Aside.*) This fellow must be conciliated; he is dangerous.

Enter JUAN *and* PEREZ, D. L. H. 1 E.

(*Approaching them.*) Withdraw until I summon you. (*Exeunt* JUAN *and* PEREZ, D. L. H. 1 E. — *To* SETH SWAP.) What do you propose, sir?

Seth. Well, now, that's a very sensible question of yourn, and may save c-o-n-s-i-d-e-r-a-b-l-e trouble. What do I propose? Well, I'll tell you, 'square.

Miralda. O, senor, I tremble for you as well as myself. You are risking your very life for one who is but a stranger to you.

Seth. Never fear, Miraldy; all we want is a *leetle* more time, and I'll manage that.

Almonte. (*Impatiently.*) Well, sir?

Seth. Don't git narvos. Let a feller's thinkin' apparatus git to work, will ye? (*Turning to* MIRALDA.) Never mind what I say, Miraldy. I'm a-goin' to talk agin time, as they do in Congress; ye see every minit's delay is so much clear gain, for Pedro will run his horse every step of the way, and have Tacon's officers down here less than no time.

Almonte. Well, sir, I await your proposal. (*Impatiently.*)

Seth. Ye see, stranger, (*turning up his cuffs, laying down his hat, and brushing back his hair,*) it's a matter of considerable over three centuries since Columbus, in his frail fishin' smacks, diskivered this ere island. I won't be sure about the date, but think it was fourteen hundred and *something;* in fact, I *know* it was. Ameriky then was nowhar; the red Indian prowled through the forest, and the catamount smoked his pipe in peace. But look at her now, a-spreadin' from east to west, and, from north to south, a-hangin' her clothes line from the north to the south pole, and a-lain' down the iron rail from the ragin' Atlantic to the shores of the Pacific. The American Eagle ——

Almonte. (*Interrupting him impatiently.*) This has nothing to do with the matter. I will not be bearded thus in my own house.

Seth. Stranger, I insist upon the American Eagle, and I must be heard. Perhaps I wander a leetle; but I'll keep strictly within parliamentary rules, and come to the pint just as I'm ready to *end*. Let me see, where was I? O, I know! — The American Eagle spreads his broad wings from the Green Mountains to the Sarah Nevada, (I think her name's Sarah,) while his tail feathers shadder Niagaree, and his open bick is ready to pounce on Mexico.

Almonte. (*Again interrupting him.*) This is intolerable. What can I do with this rascal? He is armed to the teeth, and a desperate man in spite of his nonsense.

Seth. Don't interrupt me, 'square. I've got the floor. The American Eagle is kivered all over with glory, barin' aloft the stunnin' motto, *E pluribus unum* — we are one of 'em! The American Eagle, hatched at Bunker Hill, raised in old Funnel Hall, and set a-flyin' by George Washington and the continental Congress. What's the fourth of July without the bird of freedom? — What's the bird of freedom without the fourth of July? Mix 'em up, and the result is Hail Columby and Yankee Doodle; united we stand, divided we fall; or, as General Putnam remarked at the battle of Okee-Chobee, Give me liberty, or give me death!

Almonte. I'll bear this no longer. (*Advancing to the door, throws it open.*) Come in.

Enter JUAN *and* PEREZ, D. L. H. 1 E.

I have been outraged and insulted in my own house. Seize and bind this intruder. (*Crosses to* L. H.; JUAN *and* PEREZ *advance timidly;* SETH SWAP *takes out his revolvers, and cocks them.*)

Seth. Jest be so good as to come on in *single file*, so's I can bring ye both down with one shot. (*They hesitate and hold back undecided.*)

Enter LOISE, *hastily*, D. L. H. 1 E., *with sealed letter.*

Loise. O, senor, here is an express rider from the governor, and he bid me hand you this paper. — (*Aside.*) I wonder what all this means. (*Crosses behind to* R. C.; ALMONTE *opens sealed package, and reads aloud.*) "*By order, &c., Count Almonte will instantly, on receipt of this order, repair with one Miralda Estalez to our palace, accompanied by the American senor, Seth Swap.* TACON."

Seth. That means me. O, I'll go 'long with ye, Almonty, my boy. I ain't at all proud — not a mite stuck up. I'll adhere to ye like shoemaker's wax, never fear. I've had an attachment for ye more'n a week, just like a sheriff's officer.

Almonte. I see it all; that cursed priest was the spy. I thought as much. He must have flown with the wings of the wind. This is bad, very bad; but I must face it out. Tacon will not be trifled with. I must not lose even a moment in complying with his order. (*Turning to* JUAN.) I have business in town; bring up a couple of volantes instantly. (*Exeunt* JUAN *and* PEREZ, D. L. H. 1 E.)

Seth. Well, if I understand all this, yer goin' to take a ride up to Havana with us, senor?

Almonte. It is the governor's order, and fortunate for you it came when it did.

Seth. Y-e-s, I calculated it would come along jest about this time.

Miralda. (*On* R. H.) Do not leave me. — (*To* SETH SWAP.) I pray you do not leave me.

Seth. Leave ye? I'll stick to ye like a brother, to the last breath. (*Drawing her arm within his, and pulling up his dickey.*) I hain't had a lady's arm in mine afore since I waited on the seulemarm at Jonesville.

Almonte. (*Has been musing to himself.*) Follow me, Miralda; we must go to the city at once.

Miralda. My prophetic heart foretold this. Holy Virgin, I may yet be saved! I am no longer an orphan. There is one above who is a Father to the fatherless. (*Music.* ALMONTE *is engaged in reading the governor's order to himself;* MIRALDA, *leaving* SETH SWAP'S *arm, kneels* C., *and, with upraised eyes, kisses her cross, while* SETH SWAP *uncovers his head reverentially;* LOISE, *who has crossed to the opposite side from* ALMONTE, *clasps her hands, and regards* MIRALDA *intently.*)

LOISE. SETH SWAP. MIRALDA. ALMONTE.
R. H. L. H.

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I. — *Council Room in Governor's Palace,* 3 *and* 4 G. C. *doors, practical, backed with interior;* TACON *in official robes on an elevated seat,* R. H. 1 G.; *a page and secretary at table on his* L. H.; *military officers on his* R. H.; PEDRO MARTINEZ *standing on* L. H. 1 G., *on* L. C. 2 G. *four persons with papers in hand as* PETITIONERS, *six guards,* R. *and* L. C. D.; *two officers on* L. H.; *four pages on back,* R. H.

Tacon. (*To* 1*st* PETITIONER.) Come forward.

1*st Petitioner.* (*Kneeling.*) A petition from the market men, excellenza.

Tacon. It shall be considered. (PETITIONER *hands paper to secretary, and exit,* C. D. L. H.)

2*d Petitioner.* (*Kneels.*) A report, excellenza, of the progress of the new "Alemada."

Tacon. It is well. (PETITIONER *hands paper to secretary, and exit,* C. D. L. H.)

3*d Petitioner.* (*Kneels.*) Report concerning the new prison, excellenza.

Tacon. Place it on file. (PETITIONER *hands paper to secretary, and exit,* C. D. L. H.)

4*th Petitioner.* (*Kneels.*) Details, excellenza, of the robbery last night.

Tacon. Ah, place that paper for early examination; for it is our

pride to make this island, so late the hotbed of ruffianism, as safe at midnight as under the broad light of the sun. (PETITIONER *hands paper to secretary, and exit,* C. D. L. H. *Addressing* PEDRO.) Now, young man, let us hear your story; we have despatched orders for the Count Almonte to attend us, and he will be here directly.

Pedro. (*Advancing to* C.) Excellenza, I am but a humble subject of the island, and my occupation a boatman in the harbor. From childhood I have loved, and have long been affianced, to one of my own class, Miralda Estalez, who lives in the *Calle de Mercederes*, and is a cigar vender. She is an orphan, excellenza, but, by her industry, has nearly paid off the mortgage on her little house, and when that is accomplished, we were to have been married. Some eight days since, the Count Almonte, who has been an occasional customer at her store, abducted her by a stratagem, and carried her to his estate at Cerito, keeping her a close prisoner.

Tacon. A bold, bad man is this Count Almonte; nor is this the first evil report that is recorded against him. Hitherto he has so cunningly devised as to put the law at fault, and to frustrate the power of justice. Female innocence has been his spoil for years, and even murder rests upon his soul. He is an example of the mistaken policy of the home government, which sells its distinctions and titles for money, placing beside those of noble lineage and long descent the daring upstart of to-day, whose only escutcheon is his purse. Know you that the girl did not go voluntarily, seduced by his lavish proposals?

Pedro. Excellenza, yes. The stratagem was one well calculated to deceive an inexperienced girl. Count Almonte bribed a petty officer of the barracks and a few privates, who, entering Miralda's store, pretended to come by authority to arrest her and conduct her before your excellenza.

Tacon. By Heaven, this was *treason!* Sit we here in authority to be thus tampered with? Young man, if this be so, we will make an example of this wicked noble. Were he the proudest in the land, he should not usurp with impunity our own prerogative. Justice on this island is quick and sure. Secretary, hand this witness the cross. (*Secretary hands a gilded cross of wood.*) Kiss this sacred emblem, and swear that which you have stated is true in every particular.

Pedro. (*Kneeling solemnly, and kissing cross.*) I swear!

Enter two officers, ALMONTE, MIRALDA, *and* SETH SWAP, C. D. L. H. MIRALDA *rushes to* PEDRO'S *side;* SETH SWAP *gazes coolly about.*

Tacon. Ah! it is well they are arrived. (*Addresses something to secretary on his* L. H.)

Miralda. Dear, dear Pedro, am I not safe at last?

Pedro. I trust so, dearest; Tacon has promised justice.

Seth. C-r-e-a-t-i-o-n! it's a regerlar perlece court. What an old grizzly the judge is! — pooty good lookin', though. I wonder what his politics is. If we had him in the State of Maine, we'd run him for Congress.

Tacon. Count Almonte, stand forth. Grave charges are preferred

against you by this young man, and circumstances plainly corroborate them. What means this high-handed outrage?

Almonte. Excellenza, these hinds are undeserving of your ear.

Tacon. The law knows no distinctions.

Almonte. The codes are not formed for us, but for the canaille, excellenza.

Tacon. (*Solemnly.*) Senor Almonte, even the great God of heaven hath subjected himself to laws.

Almonte. But the girl is unharmed and innocent.

Tacon. Possibly; yet she would not have been so but for our timely interference. I will show you, senor, that the common people are as much the subjects of Spain, and the care of its laws, as the proudest noble on the island. You are charged with abducting the girl from her home by stratagem. Answer: is this so?

Almonte. Excellenza, I cannot deny that I indueed her to visit my house at Cerito, and by stratagem.

Tacon. You bribed our soldiers for an illegal act. Is this true?

Almonte. I paid them for their services; but *bribery* is a harsh word, excellenza.

Tacon. Do you know the crime it involves, Senor Almonte?

Almonte. Crime, excellenza?

Tacon. Ay, you are guilty of *treason* in tampering with our soldiers. You have held this girl a close prisoner within your house for a period of days and nights, thus ruining her fair fame with the world.

Almonte. Excellenza, I have assured you of her innocence.

Tacon. This *you* may know, and she may witness; but the cold tongue of slander is insidious, senor, and will have its say. Your fearful crime with the young flower girl of the Plaza is yet fresh in the public mind. There is but one reparation now in your power to make to this girl Miralda.

Almonte. What is it, excellenza?

Tacon. (*Pointing to* ALMONTE *impressively.*) Marry her!

Almonte. (*In amazement.*) Excellenza, impossible!

Tacon. It is my judgment, and must be consummated.

Miralda. O Pedro, what do I hear?

Pedro. Horrible! Is this, then, the justice I have sought?

Seth. (*In great agitation.*) See here, 'square, what the deuse are ye doin' on? You're spilin' every thing. It's wus than pizenin' her to make her marry that feller.

Tacon. Silence!

Seth. (*Aside.*) I shall ruin somebody's fun before I leave this island.

Almonte. Excellenza, consider my rank and position. You cannot mean that I shall marry this girl.

Tacon. It is my command. You need hardly be informed, Senor Almonte, that here my will is law. You will depart at once to the church of San Filipe, hard by, with this officer and Miralda Estalez, there to be joined as husband and wife by the priest in attendance. I will brook no delay.

Almonte. Excellenza, is there no other reparation I can make?

Tacon. None

Almonte. Half my fortune, or even imprisonment.

Tacon. Neither will clear up the fair fame of this girl.

Miralda. O excellenza, this is terrible! I beseech thee spare the guilty, that the innocent may not perish!

Tacon. Obey me, girl, without words. Your fortune is in my keeping. Officers, attend to my orders. (*Music. An officer advances, and motions the* COUNT *from the apartment; he walks with his head upon his breast. Exeunt officer and four guards,* C. D. L. H., *with* ALMONTE. *Officer takes* MIRALDA *gently by the arm, and leads her to* C. *doors.* PEDRO *and* SETH SWAP *much excited.* PEDRO *sinks into a seat,* L. H., *and groans audibly.* MIRALDA *turns, breaks from officer, rushing to* PEDRO'S *side, sinks upon the floor, and kisses his hand passionately. Officer returns, and reconducts her again towards* C. D.)

Miralda. O holy Virgin, support me! This cannot be; surely I dream. It is too fearful for reality.

(*Exit,* C. D. L. H., *gently forced by officers.*)

Tacon. Pedro Martinez, you will retire with this American, but return directly, as you will be wanted.

Seth. I should think it was about time to go. We shall be wanted, eh? Well, hang me if I don't come back! Some of these fellers shall *walk Spanish.* Cheer up, Pedro, man; let's go and talk this thing over. I wish I was President of Africa, Timbucto, the Cannibal Islands, or some other unknown and uninhabited quarter of the globe. I'd astonish this Cuba judge. (*Music. Exeunt* PEDRO *and* SETH, C. D. L. H. TACON *and others closed in.*)

SCENE II. — *Street outside of the Palace,* 1 G.

Enter PEDRO *and* SETH SWAP, L. H. 1 E.

Pedro. There is nothing left for me to live for now; every breath I draw for the future will be like a barbed hook thrust back and forth in my flesh. O Justice, the bread which should feed a nation, what sins are committed in thy name! That she whom I have so loved, so cherished, so long waited for, should thus be torn from me! Alas! I have nothing to hope for, nothing to pray for, now.

Seth. (*Regarding him intently.*) Creation! I think it's beginnin' to rain. (*Wiping the tears from his eyes.*)

Pedro. Don't mind me, comrade; but this great affliction bears heavily upon me. You cannot know how I loved Miralda. From very childhood we have been all in all to each other; and when her mother died, and placed her hand in mine, I felt the bond between us so sacred that it seemed no earthly power could sever it. But this dream of bliss is dispelled; the reality has come at last.

Seth. It's seldom I swear, cuz it's agin my principles; but *darn my pictur,* if this ain't too bad! Look here, Pedro, let's go back to the governor, and see if we can't alter his idee of justice. P'r'aps 'tain't too late.

Pedro. Alas, comrade! ere this they are married; and what earthly power can undo that? No; it is too late — too late!

Seth. J-e-r-u-s-a-l-e-m! I never seed a case till now when I thought that *di*-vorce was a *di*-vine dispensation of Providence. By the Eternal, Pedro! why can't we git a *di*-vorce?

Pedro. Death alone divorces hands in Cuba!

Seth. Creation, what an uncivilized idee! I'm goin' back to see the governor any how; for I shall spile if I don't do something. Come, Pedro.

Enter mad CECIL, *strolling along moodily*, R. H. 1 E.

Cecil. I bide my time; I bide my time.

Seth. Good gracious! there's that poor woman agin, chock full of misery. By Jerusalem! that Almonte has got sins enough to answer for.

Cecil. Almonte! Who utters that name?

Seth. I was only callin' down a small quantity of *thunder* and *lightnin'* on his head, my good woman, that's all.

Cecil. (*Shaking her head vaguely.*) Lost Isabelle! lost Isabelle! (*Suddenly takes* SETH SWAP *by the arm, and leads him forward. — In a loud whisper.*) I have read it yonder among the stars, in the still watches of the night — my prayers are answered; judgment is *slow*, but *sure*. They say I am mad; I am *not* mad; I am *waiting*.

(*She slowly disappears, muttering*, 1 E. L. H.)

Seth. Creation! Misery seems to be piled up here in Cuba, like haystacks in a mowin' field. Come, Pedro, come.

Pedro. Ay, comrade, you may lead me where you will. I have no ambition now. What years of thoughtfulness and study have I passed, that I might become worthy of her! and, when the dear object is within my grasp, like a precious jewel upon the water it sinks from my hand forever.

Seth. All hope is not gone. (*Laying his hand on him tenderly.*)

Pedro. True, for she may still be mine in heaven!

(*Exeunt*, R. H. 1 E.)

SCENE III. — *The Chamber of Justice, as before.*

Enter PEDRO, *leaning upon* SETH SWAP, C. D. L. H., *down* L. H.

Tacon. Ah! you are once more here; it is well. (*A report of six muskets is heard without*, U. E. R. H.)

MIRALDA *rushes in, with dishevelled hair, followed by the officer, a priest, and mad* CECIL, C. D. R. H.

Miralda. (*Sinking terrified upon the floor*, L. H., *and raising her hands.*) Great Heaven! they have shot him dead in the court yard!

Officer. (*Distinctly.*) Excellenza, the sentence is executed; the Count Almonte is no more.

Cecil. Ha, ha! Retribution is come. I have waited patiently, and can now die in peace. Isabelle, thou art avenged!

Pedro. (*On* L. H., *in consternation.*) Almonte executed!

Seth. I can't cipher this out, that's a fact.

Tacon. Silence! (SETH *retires up.*) The instinct of this poor woman (*pointing to mad* CECIL) has brought her here to witness the closing hour of a great criminal, one who has made her life a purgatory. Justice is satisfied. Officer, accompany this lady, the widow of Count Almonte, to Cerito. See her established as the mistress of her late husband's property, one half of which is confiscated to the government. (*Exeunt officer, priest, and mad* CECIL, C. D. L. H.) Miralda, (*turning towards her,*) the man who has so foully wronged you, and whose crimes have long been known, has made the only reparation that your honor and justice would admit. You are now *free.* With the title and wealth which the law now gives you, wilt marry this man? (*Pointing to* PEDRO.)

Miralda. (*Springing to his arms.*) O excellenza, excellenza, he is all in all to me! (*They embrace. She turns half round, and holds forth her hand to* SETH SWAP, *who advances,* R. C.) Ah, my friend, what do we not owe to you!

Seth. Don't mention it; there *is* justice in the world, after all. Judge, you can take my hat. (*Throws it at his feet.*)

Tacon. (*To* SETH SWAP.) Senor, your honesty is an excuse for your enthusiasm.

Pedro. (*Solemnly.*) O Heaven, I thank thee! Bitter was the discipline, but sweet is the fruit! (MIRALDA *resting on his breast. Soft music.*)

TABLEAU.

FOUR PAGES. GUARDS. GUARDS.

SECRETARY. OFFICER.

TACON. SETH SWAP. GUARDS.

MIRALDA.

OFFICER. PEDRO.

R. H. L. H.

Curtain.